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Advanced Search**Standard Interpretations****10/09/1996 - Enforcement of the Use of Seat Belts on Powered Industrial Trucks in General Industry.** [Standard Interpretations - Table of Contents](#)

• Standard Number: 1910.178

October 9, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR: REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

FROM: JOHN B. MILES, JR.,
DIRECTORATE OF COMPLIANCE PROGRAMSSUBJECT: Enforcement of the Use of Seat Belts on
Powered Industrial Trucks in General Industry

It has come to my attention that clarification is needed to ensure that a uniform approach is taken by all OSHA offices with respect to the enforcement of the use of seat belts on powered industrial trucks in general industry.


American National Standards Institute (ANSI) B56.1-1969 Safety Standard for Powered Industrial Trucks, was adopted by OSHA under the procedures described in Section 6(a) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act). ANSI B56.1-1969 does not have provisions for the use of seat belts. Therefore, 29 CFR 1910.178 does not contain requirements for the use of seat belts. However, Section 5(a)(1) of the OSH Act require employers to protect employees from serious and recognized hazards. Recognition of the hazard of powered industrial truck tipover and the need for the use of an operator restraint system is evidenced by certain requirements in the more current versions of ANSI B56.1 consensus standard for powered industrial trucks; ASME/ANSI B56.1a-1989 Addenda to ASME/ANSI B56.1-1988, and ASME B56.1-1993 Safety Standard for Low Lift and High Lift Trucks. In addition, seat belts have been supplied by many manufacturers of counterbalanced, center control, high lift trucks which have a sit-down nonelevating operator position. Also, some manufacturers have instituted retrofit programs for the installation of operator restraint systems to older powered industrial trucks.


OSHA's enforcement policy relative to the use of seat belts on powered industrial trucks is that employers are obligated to require operators of powered industrial trucks which are equipped with operator restraint devices or seat belts to use the devices. OSHA should enforce the use of such devices under Section 5(a)(1) of the OSH Act.

After consultation with the Regional Solicitor, OSHA may also cite Section 5(a)(1) of the

OSH Act if an employer has not taken advantage of a manufacturer operator restraint system or seat belt retrofit program.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [the Office of General Industry Compliance Assistance at (202) 693-1850].

 [Standard Interpretations - Table of Contents](#)

 [Back to Top](#)

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